



# Our Lady Help of Christians

## Feast of the Holy Family

27<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

Fr. Harry Curtis, Parish Priest

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Sunday, 27 <sup>th</sup> December <b>FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY</b>	<b>Sat evening: 5.30 pm</b> <b>Sun morning: 11.00 am</b>	John Flanagan Josie McCrave (Intentions)
Monday, 28 <sup>th</sup> December <i>Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs</i>	No Mass Today	
Tuesday, 29 <sup>th</sup> December <i>Feast of St. Thomas Becket, Martyr</i>	9.15 am Mass	Peter Kennedy (Intentions)
Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> December <i>Sixth Day in the Christmas Octave</i>	No Public Mass Today	
Thursday, 31 <sup>st</sup> December <i>Optional Commemoration of St. Sylvester I, Pope</i>	<b>10.00 am</b>	In Thanksgiving for 2020 and for blessings on 2021
Friday, 1 <sup>st</sup> January <b>SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD</b>	12.00 noon	The People of the Parish
Saturday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> January <i>Memorial of St. Basil the Great &amp; St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops</i>	<b>Sat evening Vigil: 5.30 pm</b>	Bridget White
Sunday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> January <b>SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY</b>	<b>Sun morning: 11.00 am</b>	Eileen Joyce (Intentions)

Welcome to Our Lady Help of Christians for the Feast of the Holy Family,  
especially if you are visiting our parish for the holidays.

### Prayer at the end of Mass:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen*

**First Friday.** This Friday is the First Friday of the month.

**Tier 4.** As you know, because of the rapid spread of the Coronavirus we have now been moved into Tier 4 where we are encouraged not to leave home if it can be avoided. So far, Places of Worship are still allowed to open for public services – and we shall continue to do so here at Our Lady's until we are told otherwise.

**If you wish to join us for Mass from your home, the equipment for livestreaming** in the church was installed last Monday. We are now live and all the action (24/7) can be viewed at <https://www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/our-lady-help-of-christians>

Here is a prayer, **an Act of Spiritual Communion**, which you can say as you watch a Livestream Mass:

*“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.”*

**The Sanctuary Candle is burning this week for the People of the Parish.**

**Our Lady's Candle is burning this week for the Hurley Family.**

**St. Don Bosco's Candle is burning this week for a Special Intention.**

**Please pray for Ronald Rowles**, and all who have died recently, and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Frs. David O'Callaghan, Francis Etherington CO, Cyril Evans and Patrick Lynch, Deacon Peter Mason, and Sr Ann Hoskison FMA, Michael Brennan and John Kennedy. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. May they rest in peace.

Please pray for those we know who are sick, especially Dermot Carroll, Bernadette Allsworth and Grace O'Rourke. If you or family members are ill and you would like to ask for prayers on this newsletter, let me know (in writing, please). Thank you.

## Goodbye to 2020



How much do you remember of 2020? It's been a busy year. It will undoubtedly be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic and a year of sorrow and fear. But there have been some positive things even in that appalling situation. Just for fun here's my list: you might like to think of things to add things to it:



- Captain Sir Tom Moore raised £38.9m for NHS Charities Together and won the nation's hearts.
- Because of restricted movement and industrial output, air quality in many cities around the world improved significantly (albeit, temporarily).
- We remembered how blessed we are to have such dedicated people working in the NHS and in Care Homes, and we came out each Thursday evening to applaud them.
- Birthdays and other celebrations became less about presents and materialism and more about sharing time and love with one another.
- Masks became required articles of dress when entering a bank, even if you are not going to rob it.
- We re-discovered how to cook at home (or so I am told!).
- Vaccines against COVID-19 were developed and made available in record time.
- Some of us have been dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world of Zoom and other electronic forms of communication.
- We just may have learned a few lessons about looking out for the welfare of others.
- Oh, and the Eurovision Song Contest was cancelled. So it hasn't been all bad.

It has also been a very busy year here in Our Lady's parish, and thank you to everyone who helped our community in any way. The outstanding event of note was the departure of the Salesian Fathers from the parish last May. This parish owes so much to them, and I know that you remember them with great respect and affection. May God bless them in their future ministries.

Next year we shall undoubtedly face many challenges together. The greatest of them will be the challenge to re-discover ourselves as a Catholic community. What will it mean to be members of the Church in modern times? I don't think that we can simply go back to the way we were before the pandemic came after it is over. Let us spend some time in prayer for guidance and then take courage for the future. It is frightening, but it is also exciting. We can face it TOGETHER.

## Hello to 2021. Bring it on! But I need a holiday first!

**Commemorative Sanctuary Candles.** For £5 you can



buy a candle that will be blessed at the Christmas Midnight Mass and then will burn in the sanctuary or by the statues of the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Joseph, or St Don Bosco, for any week of your choice during the coming year.

It can be for any reason you want: to remember a loved one; for a special intention; or why not give one as a Christmas present?

**Crib Offerings.** We shall be donating crib offerings this year to Friends of the Holy Land to help the poorest Christian families, especially in and around Bethlehem, the West Bank, Gaza and Israel.

**Tailpiece:** I was given a book of children's letters to Santa Claus. Here are one or two of my favourites. First, a plea from a young realist: "Dear Santa, Why do you only leave gifts for good boys and girls? It isn't fair to the real

*kids."* Then there are those seeking help for others – but not always in a totally disinterested way: "Dear Santa Claus. My mother needs a new stove. The stove she got don't cook so good." Finally, a no-nonsense appeal from the heart: "Santa Claus: Last Christmas I asked you for a baby brother. This Christmas I want you to take him back."

I wish you every blessing in the New Year. The church looked wonderful at Christmas and our celebrations went very well under difficult conditions. Thank you very much to all who helped out in any way: the stewards and cleaners, those who cleaned and prepared the church, arranged the flowers, made "bubbles" for the tree, helped to assemble the crib, read, sang or played, served at the altar, and all the many other jobs. Above all, thanks to you and your families for coming and joining in these celebrations.

***I should also like to thank you all for your Christmas offerings and for the many individual gifts and cards that I received. May God bless you all.***

**Fr. Harry**